

SPOKANE COUNTY WATER DISTRICT No. 3
Spokane County, Washington
January 1, 1992 Through December 31, 1992

Schedule Of Findings

1. The District Should Ensure That Awards Programs Serve Public Purposes

The district held an awards banquet for its commissioners, employees, and their spouses in December 1992. Approximately 30 people attended. The cost of \$477 was paid with district funds.

Article VIII, Section 7 of the *Constitution of the State of Washington* prohibits the gift of public money or property to:

. . . any individual, association, company or corporation . . .

In Attorney General Memorandum 1987, No. 53, the Attorney General's Office provided guidance on the expenditure of public funds for ceremonies and celebrations. Generally, if a public utility district chooses to limit a celebration or ceremony to a quiet dinner at district expense attended only by commissioners, employees, their spouses, and excludes the general public, the event is essentially a private celebration and an inappropriate use of public funds.

Based on the circumstances described above, hosting the awards banquet at district expense was an inappropriate use of public funds.

District officials thought that an awards banquet was consistent with the practice of giving nominal awards to reward employees for dedicated service.

We recommend that, except for employees being honored, the district refrain from hosting commissioners, employees, and their spouses at other than public ceremonies.